

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

For Release: **IMMEDIATE**
Date: August 12, 2008

Contact: Seth Effron
Phone: 919/733-5612

GOV. EASLEY SIGNS SB 847, 'PREVENT AGRICULTURE PESTICIDE EXPOSURE'

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley today signed into law Senate Bill 847, “An act to add agricultural workers to those protected against retaliation in the workplace and to direct the Pesticide Board to adopt rules requiring licensed pesticide applicators to record the specific time of day when each pesticide application is completed, as recommended by the Governor's Task Force on Preventing Agricultural Pesticide Exposure.” This new law, along with funding approved by the legislature in the governor’s budget, will help protect agricultural laborers, farmers and applicators who work with and around pesticides.

“This new law helps us move forward to protect the health of our farm workers,” said Easley. “Requiring employers to keep more detailed records of pesticides being used and forbidding retaliation against those who might complain about exposure to these chemicals are important steps toward safety in agricultural workplaces.”

The legislation was developed based upon recommendations from the Governor’s Task Force on Preventing Agriculture Pesticide Exposure that was headed by State Health Director Leah Devlin. The new law makes it illegal for employers to retaliate against farm workers who complain about unhealthy exposure to pesticides. It also directs the state Pesticide Board to require more detailed record keeping on the time of day and kinds of pesticides being used, and it requires those records to be kept for two years, instead of the current 30 days.

“This bill represents a significant step forward,” said Devlin, the task force chair. “There is more to be done and we will continue to develop new health protection measures and work to see they are implemented.”

Devlin noted that the task force’s work will be continuing through the recently-organized Interagency Pesticide Work Group that will operate out of the state Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

In the state budget, \$350,000 was designated to replace federal funding that was cut to track pesticide poisoning cases. It also will pay for two state workers to train farm laborers on proper handling of pesticides.

The bill was sponsored by Sen. Charles Albertson (D-Duplin). It passed the state Senate 48-0 and the House of Representatives 118-0. The law becomes effective upon the governor’s signature.

###

Governor's Press Office
State Capitol, Raleigh, NC 27603-8001
(919) 733-5612 - Toll Free 1-800-662-7005
FAX (919) 733-5166